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United Nations

Report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-eighth session
Supplement No. 46 (A/58/46)

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Note

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1. The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation held its fifty-first session in Vienna from 27 to 31 January 2003. Joyce L. Lipsztein (Brazil), Yasuhito Sasaki (Japan) and Robi M. Chatterjee (Canada) served as Chairperson, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, respectively. The meeting served to advance the new programme of work established by the Scientific Committee, at its fiftieth session, in 2001.[1]

2. The Scientific Committee took note of General Assembly resolution 56/50 of 10 December 2001, in which the Assembly, reaffirming the desirability of the Scientific Committee continuing its work, commended the Committee for fulfilling its original mandate with scientific authority and independence of judgement; requested the United Nations Environment Programme to continue providing support for the effective conduct of the work of the Committee; and endorsed the Committee's plans for its future activities.

3. To advance the new programme of work approved by the General Assembly, the Scientific Committee considered new information relevant to assessing sources of radiation, the exposures that those sources give rise to and the effects that result. Its deliberations focused on a review of documents prepared by the Secretariat on subjects that the Scientific Committee had identified as the most important topics for further study, including exposures of workers and the public from various sources of radiation; sources-to-effects assessment for radon in homes and workplaces; radioecology; epigenetic effects of exposure to ionizing radiation; health effects due to radiation from the Chernobyl accident (for which the Committee has established official collaboration with scientists in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine); evaluation of new epidemiological studies of radiation and cancer; epidemiological evaluation and dose response of diseases other than cancer that might be related to radiation exposure; medical radiation exposures; and overview documents on the health effects of radiation and the sources of ionizing radiation exposure, intended both to guide development of the other documents and eventually to disseminate the summarized findings of the Committee to a wider audience.

4. The fifty-first session of the Scientific Committee was rescheduled from its original date of 3-7 May 2002 because support funds in the budget for the biennium 2002-2003 were inadequate to allow the Committee to meet each year and advance its developing documents. By combining non-post funds for both years of the budget biennium, the single, full-scale session that became the fifty-first session of the Committee was made possible. Knowing that the programme initiated at the fifty-first session of the Committee could not survive the hiatus of loss of another annual meeting, it was deemed imperative that a solution to the Committee's budgetary crisis be found.

5. Notice of the dire financial situation had therefore been provided by the Scientific Committee to the General Assembly in its report,[2] in which it urged that the problem of inadequate budgetary support be solved. Subsequently, the General Assembly, in its resolution 57/115 of 11 December 2002, urged the United Nations Environment Programme to review and strengthen the present funding of the

Scientific Committee, pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 56/50; and emphasized the need for the Scientific Committee to hold regular sessions on an annual basis so that its report could reflect the latest developments and findings in the field of ionizing radiation and thereby provide updated information for dissemination among all States. The Scientific Committee acknowledges resolution 57/115 with gratitude.

6. The Scientific Committee has therefore decided to proceed with its work in the expectation that the expressions of support will be appropriately reflected in the outcome of the budgetary planning process for the biennium 2004-2005. A favourable outcome would allow continuation of the new programme of work, which had been materially advanced during the detailed technical discussions held at the fifty-first session of the Committee.

7. In anticipation that the momentum now established will not be lost and that adequate funds for the Scientific Committee to hold annual meetings would be restored for the biennium 2004-2005 and subsequent bienniums in accordance with resolution 57/115, the Scientific Committee decided to hold its fifty-second session in Vienna from 26 to 30 April 2004. To guide the Scientific Committee, new officers were elected to serve at the fifty-second and fifty-third sessions: Yasuhito Sasaki (Japan), Chairman, Robi M. Chatterjee (Canada), Vice-Chairman, and Peter A. Burns (Australia), Rapporteur.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 46* (A/56/46), para. 10.

[2] Ibid., *Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 46* (A/57/46), paras. 6-8.

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